Pythagoras is often described as a very important mathematician, yet we know little about his achievements. What we do know is that he was the leader of a society which was half scientific and half religious. It was a secret society and today Pythagoras is still a mysterious figure.

It is believed that Pythagoras was born on the Greek island of Samos. His father was a merchant, and as a child. Pythagoras travelled with him selling their goods. Pythagoras was well educated. He learned music and poetry and had three philosophers to teach him who introduced Pythagoras to mathematics and advised him to travel to Egypt to learn more about mathematics and astronomy So in 535 BC, Pythagoras travelled to Egypt where he visited many temples and took part in discussions with priests. Many of the customs he learnt in Egypt he came to adopt. For example, the Egyptian priests refused to eat beans and wear animal skins, as did Pythagoras later in his life.

In 525 BC the King of Persia invaded Egypt. Pythagoras was taken prisoner and was transported to Babylon. It was here, taught by the Babylonians, that he reached perfection in arithmetic and music. When Pythagoras returned to Samos he founded there a school which was called 'The Semicircle. It seems that the people of Samos did not appreciate the teaching methods of Pythagoras and they treated him rudely and improperly. Furthermore, they wanted to involve Pythagoras in local politics against his will. For these reasons, he went to Italy Pythagoras believed that numbers rule the universe and that numbers are present in all things. He also connected mathematics to music and recognised the healing power of music. He used it as a kind of therapy to help those who were ill. Another of his beliefs was that there are three types of men: those who love wisdom, those who love honour and those who love wealth.

Pythagoras was a mathematician, an astronomer, and a philosopher. Today we remember him best for his famous geometry theorem, known as Pythagoras theorem*,